

Pesticide

info

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PESTICIDES



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Pull welcome mat in, keep pesky guests out

The best way to control home and garden pests is to avoid them in the first place. Be inhospitable to these unwanted guests. Pests, like people, have basic survival needs: air, water, food, and shelter. Take these away or shut off access and pests will find your home and garden less attractive. They have to go somewhere else to survive.

PREVENTING PESTS INDOORS

Water, water, but not everywhere

Pests hang around in nooks and crannies of your home. Get rid of the water they need to survive. Fix leaky plumbing. Get rid of standing water in trays under your house plants, under your refrigerator, or in buckets. Moisture attracts pests so dry or throw out wet rags and other damp materials.

Don't feed 'em

Make it harder for pests to get food. Store foods such as cereal, pasta, flour, raisins, and crackers in tightly sealed containers. Keep

your kitchen clean of crumbs and free from cooking grease. Don't leave food in pet bowls for long periods, especially overnight. Empty your garbage can frequently and put food scraps in tightly covered, animal-proof trash bins.

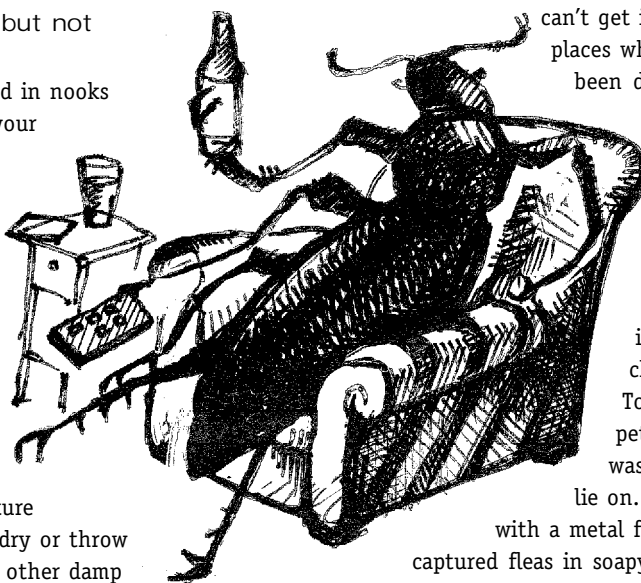
Get them where they hide

Block off or get rid of pest hiding places. Seal cracks and crevices with caulk so pests can't get in. Regularly vacuum places where food may have been dropped, including chairs and sofas.

Avoid storing newspapers, paper bags, and boxes for long periods. Also, before bringing packages or boxes into your home, check them for pests. To control fleas, bathe pets frequently and wash any surfaces they lie on. Comb dogs and cats with a metal flea comb and drown captured fleas in soapy water.

Bar the door

Keep out crawling and flying pests by installing screens on windows and doors. Block passageways through the floor and caulk and seal openings in walls and in the backs and



floors of cabinets. Put weather-stripping on doors and windows. Keep doors shut when not in use. To help prevent rats, put baffles on utility wires leading to the house. Routinely clean floor drains with soap and hot water.

PREVENTING PESTS OUTSIDE

Get them where they hide outside, too

Wood piles under and around your home attract termites, carpenter ants, and rats. Store wood off the ground and away from the house. Keep a clear area around the house and don't plant shrubs and ground covers, such as ivy, where they touch the house. Pests hide in undisturbed areas – under rocks and stepping stones, for example. Diseased plants, tree prunings, and fallen fruit and leaves harbor pests. Pests can't set up housekeeping if you get rid of the materials that shelter them.

Remove breeding sites

Pet droppings attract flies that can spread bacteria. Clean up and bury droppings at least every few days. Don't accumulate litter or garbage. It draws mice, rats, and other rodents. Drain off standing puddles of water where mosquitoes and other pests can breed. Make sure drain pipes and other water sources drain away from your house.

PREVENTING PESTS IN YOUR GARDEN

A healthy plant resists pests

Keep lawns, trees and shrubs healthy with proper watering and pruning, and by using the right fertilizer. Begin by selecting plants suited for your area and soil, and install a proper watering system to conserve water. Also, select plants that resist pests or do not have major pest problems. Prepare the soil and plant at the right time of the year. Plants with similar water or sunlight requirements should be planted in the same area. For example, don't place drought-tolerant plants in or next to a lawn.

Native flowers, shrubs, and trees are often good choices because they are well adapted to local conditions and require minimal care. Plant natives based on their natural growing habits. Select seeds and seedlings known to resist pests and disease and suited to the climate and soil where you live.

Many pests prefer specific kinds of plants

Don't provide them a continued source of food. Don't put annual plants (including vegetables) that are similar to one another in the same area year after year. For example, rotate potatoes, tomatoes, and peppers with other kinds of plants. Mix vegetables and herbs by planting in alternating rows or small blocks. Talk to your nursery about crop rotation. Some pests don't show up until late in the growing season, so plant susceptible crops early.

Soil, water, and organic matter

Make sure your garden has good drainage. Test by digging a hole and filling it with water. If the soil is compacted, then air and water are not available to the roots and plants grow poorly. Use a tiller to loosen compacted soil. Before planting, add organic matter to the soil. Mulch your garden with leaves, or shredded or chipped bark. Mulch should be 3" to 4" deep for weed control.

In areas of high rainfall (more than 20" a year), soils tend to be acidic and plants need phosphorous, magnesium and calcium. Azaleas and other acid-loving plants grow well here. In low-rainfall areas, soils tend to be alkaline and plants may show iron deficiency. To find out about local soil conditions, ask your nursery or county University of California Cooperative Extension office (look in the government pages of your phone book –sometimes under "Farm and Home Advisor"). They can tell you if you need to add organic matter or adjust the soil pH (acidity/alkalinity balance).

Pest problems? Practice IPM

IPM, or integrated pest management, means selecting the method least disruptive to the environment. It includes integrating proper planning, natural pest controls ("good bugs"), cultural and mechanical controls, and chemicals, if necessary. If you decide to use a pesticide, do a little homework before buying. Read the label before using. If you have questions, call your county agricultural commissioner, who enforces pesticide laws locally. Look for the phone number in your local white pages, under county government headings, or on DPR's Web site at www.cdpr.ca.gov, where you can also find more tips and information.

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